



Flashback

Journal of the Washington County Historical Society

Volume 72, No. 1
Spring 2022

“Preserving for Posterity”

Mary C. Parler, Ozarks Folklorist



Mary Celestia Parler (left) tape records musicians in the Oriole barbershop in Bentonville, ca. 1950s.

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Submissions

Flashback (ISSN: 0428-5573) is published quarterly in the spring, summer, fall, and winter as an official publication of the Washington County Historical Society. Send all materials for publication to: *Flashback* Editor, Washington County Historical Society, 118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

There is no payment for articles published in *Flashback*. The editor retains the right to edit all submitted articles prior to publication.

Membership

Society membership is invited to those interested in the preservation of Washington County history. Annual dues (as of January 2020) for categories of members are: Senior, Student, Public Library, \$20; General, \$30; Trail Blazer, \$50; Explorer \$100; Wagon Master, \$250; Pioneer, \$500; Statesperson, \$1,000.

Members are mailed *Flashback* each quarter. Available past issues are \$6 each, postpaid. Add \$1 postage for issues printed in 1951 through February 1972. Web site: washcohistoricalsociety.org or headquartershouse.org.

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Preserving our past for future generations

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On the cover:

Mary Celestia Parler Randolph was a University of Arkansas professor and avid collector and scholar of the oral traditions of the Ozarks. Throughout the 1950s and '60s, she and her students assembled the largest cultural collection of sound recordings, texts, photographs, and ephemera from Arkansas and the Ozark Mountains. Photographer Robert M. Mottar. Mary C. Parler Photographs Collection (MC 896), UofA Folklore Collection, UofA Libraries Special Collections.

Mail Clerk to Marine: A WWI Marine from Washington County

*2021 Winner of the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize
for Best Article on the History of Fayetteville*

By Amanda Bancroft

T HE MURAL, PART I

Each individual name on a memorial is a little universe filled with myriad relationships like star constellations. A mural can't tell us their favorite food, or what they believed, or how deeply they loved. It can't depict their dances, romances, prejudices, fears, dreams, horrible mistakes, and brave sacrifice. But it can help us remember to get to know them.

Upstairs in the old Washington County Courthouse is one such mural that lists the names of the 53 men from Washington County who died in WWI. One of these was Frederick Wayne Johnson, a little universe that began as a boy who loved raisins and ended as a Marine who loved Sundays.

BOYHOOD

Frederick Wayne Johnson was born March 12, 1891, and joked that his birthday was not yet among the notable birthdays listed in newspapers. He spoke German, studied it in school, and his family would sing carols in German around their Christmas tree. But his first name, Frederick, was too obviously German. His three brothers and two sisters sometimes called him "Jobe" because he suffered trials reminiscent of that biblical figure. Some friends called him Fritz. Most people called him by his middle name, Wayne.

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The World War I mural in the Historic Washington County Courthouse, painted by William Steene in 1920, on commission by the Marion Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Names of Washington County men who died in the war are listed on the two panels in the center of the painting. It hangs on the second floor lobby of the courthouse. Image found at <https://www.washingtoncountyar.gov/government/about/history/world-war-i-memorial>.

His Arkansas parents had moved to Everton, Missouri, to raise their children and run their general store, B. F. Johnson's Cash Store. At age 16, he joined the Everton Presbyterian Church but had more curiosity about religion than devotion to dogma. One friend asked him in a letter if his religious views had changed since the time Wayne had expressed his opinion on the subject as a blunt "dang it" written in all caps. Throughout his life, he often attended Sunday services of different religions simply to observe their customs.

Wayne was a good student, graduating at age 17 with the Everton Missouri High School class of 1907. For the remainder of his life, he insisted that his younger siblings pursue their education while he worked to help pay for it. He wrote to them, "You must plan to do something really worthwhile, you must get a good education and fit yourself to take a place of responsibility and trust in this world."¹

He briefly worked as a farmhand near Raymond, Kansas, for \$2.50 a day plus board, rain or shine. In 1908, his family moved back to Arkansas after swapping their store for a pear orchard in Washington County, 5 miles south of Fayetteville. Now a young man, Wayne helped them move by railway and get established on their new farm. He trimmed trees, made sweet potato ridges, hoed potatoes, plowed corn, butchered hogs, fixed fences, cut weeds, mowed grass, watered livestock, watched sheep, washed the buggy, sawed logs...an endless list of tasks.

But life for this young man was not all work and no play. His letters and journals detail a variety of activities. He attended a Buffalo Bill show at the Lyric Theatre, ate ice cream at neighbor Cate's house, played the card game Rook with other teens, went to pie suppers at area chapels like Rieff's and Dowell's and schools like Grady, saw silent films and University Commencement plays at the Ozark Theatre, and enjoyed Sunday school class picnics, persimmon hunts, county fairs, croquet games, singing, and fishing. He even made a hammock, and probably made good use of it!²

In December of 1911, he got his teaching license. He was a member



Left, Frederick Wayne Johnson.
Below, Wilton Johnson, in his Marine uniform.
Photographs courtesy Anne Prichard.



of the Washington County Teachers Association and attended a teacher's institute in Fayetteville in 1912, with a 5-month stint as a teacher at Shady Grove School District 31 in Hogeye.³ Oral history tells the story of Wayne riding to school on a mule with his youngest brother Benjamin Franklin Johnson III, who would ride the mule home while Wayne stayed in Hogeye for the week until he got a ride home. The archives are silent about Wayne's experiences as a teacher, but it appears to have been a short career.

CAREER AS A RAILWAY MAIL CLERK

Wayne applied to be a Railway Mail Clerk on November 26, 1912. "I take great pleasure in making the announcement," Wayne wrote to his sister Eva on April 26, 1913, "that I have just been appointed substitute Railway Mail Clerk."

Clerks had to memorize train schedules and always know where they were at any given moment so that they wouldn't miss a mail exchange on their "run," also called a "line." To get this job, potential clerks would use "practice cases" which were portable letter cases used to develop skill in sorting special cards into "pigeon holes" or cubbies that were labeled with destinations. The original mail slots Wayne used to practice for the job are still in use today to display animal skulls and natural objects at the Johnson Farmhouse. Wayne studied hard to achieve his goal, once spending an entire day on Kessler Mountain studying with his brother Wilton.

He received his examination in July 1913. He got a 99.91 percent and almost immediately began his first route. He was the only one out of 14 in Fayetteville to pass the test and eagerly wrote to Eva: "I go to Dennison Texas next week. I suppose I get \$900 per year to start, with a \$100 raise each year. I think I will like my work fine." This was adventure in a sardine can: plenty of travel and danger while squashed in a narrow hallway of a mail car, slots and pouches lining both sides.

On July 9th he wrote home that he had stayed overnight in a clerk's room by the name of "Tiger Lilly" and on the 10th he slept in the "Shenandoah" room. By August he was home again studying train schedules and doing farm work. Soon he'd become a regular on the rails.

From 1913-1917, he was stationed at Dallas, Texas, then Little Rock, Arkansas, and finally at Bald Knob, Arkansas, on a route to Memphis,

Tennessee. He probably didn't deliver only letters. People shipped all sorts of things by parcel post and mail car, from groceries and farm goods to babies and children, until new regulations were enforced in 1915. If a baby was shipped on Wayne's route, he might have been responsible for looking after the child, just like today's airport attendants are responsible for unaccompanied minors.

RACE AND THE RAILWAY

In the fall of 1913, Wayne began regularly running lines on the railway. This same year, President Wilson enacted policies that resulted in the segregation of railway clerks. According to the Smithsonian Museum, "The presidency of Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921) marked a particularly difficult period for race relations in the Railway Mail Service." At the time, the Federal Post Office Department "was the largest employer of African Americans in the federal government."

"At its apogee in 1915, some 20,000 postal clerks worked aboard 4,000 Railway Post Office cars that traversed more than 200,000 miles of track."⁴ Arkansas was right in the thick of it. "In 1913, clerk Robert Prather of Little Rock, AR, presented Postmaster General Albert Burleson with a petition calling for the segregation of clerks in the Railway Mail Service by race. The petition was signed by 8,000 clerks and cited various grievances. These included resentment at having to share sleeping quarters with Black men and occasionally being subordinate to Black clerks with superior positions."⁵

These events connect to Wayne's papers now preserved in the Johnson archives. Wayne acquired a desirable transfer to a different railway line and saved a newspaper clipping that mentioned how he got the job. "F W Johnson of Fayetteville is a new railway clerk on the Memphis division, taking the place of Felix Owen, colored, who was dismissed from the service a few weeks ago."⁶ Wayne wrote to his father about his new position, and said "I forgot to tell you that they fired a 'n-----' to make this place for me. The Office men at each end and all the other clerks are glad I got it."⁷

So, what happened to Felix? James Felix Owens (born in 1883) was living with his family in Bald Knob, Arkansas, at the time and had been working for the railroad for at least six years by the time he was fired in 1916. He then served in the army (African Americans were banned from serving in the Marines at that time), got married in 1919, and bought an Arkansas farm with his wife Lucy Givens. He died in Los Angeles, California, in 1965.⁸

Wayne wrote many letters home to his father, B. F. Johnson II. On November 2, 1914, he wrote that the railroad now had "steel cars with leather cushioned seats, and they keep the cars real clean. It's a pleasure to ride in them." The Smithsonian notes that these changes to railway car construction resulted in white employees being assigned to the newer (and

safer) cars. "Railway Post Office cars were traditionally made of wood and rode just behind the locomotive. This resulted, not surprisingly, in fiery blazes, killing clerks and burning mail. As steel cars became more common, there were debates over Black RPO clerks being relegated to older wooden cars while other clerks moved to the new steel cars."⁹

This new form of segregation was doubly difficult because, unlike Wayne, Black clerks were not able to access insurance in case of accident or death. The 1913-1915 Railway Mail Association Charter Constitution booklet belonging to Wayne noted in Article III Section I Membership, that only a man "who is of the Caucasian race" could join the association and benefit from accident insurance. This was a dangerous job, and Wayne experienced freight car wrecks and saw his line get washed out by floods. As Wayne himself described it when he mailed home his accident insurance policy from the Association, "I was afraid I would lose in chasing around so much." This was his expression indicating he feared to lose his life.

THE LIFE OF A RAILWAY MAIL CLERK

On November 26, 1915, he wrote to his father about his current schedule between Bald Knob, Arkansas, and Memphis, Tennessee. "We come from Memphis in 3 hours 39 minutes, about 92 miles and make all stops. I leave here one morning at 2:00, arrive Memphis at 5:50am, leave Memphis 9:20am, arrive Bald Knob at 1:30pm, leave Bald Knob next day at noon, arrive Memphis at 4:00pm, leave at midnight, arrive at Bald Knob 3:40am and layover 2 whole days lacking 1 hour and 40 minutes." How's that for a work shift?

But it was also Wayne's chance to travel and see part of the world. "I went to the Texas State Fair. The Fine Arts exhibition was grand. I saw Lincoln Beachy loop the loop in his airship also fly with this machine turned upside down. He is surely a daring airman." Lincoln Beachy was a famous stunt pilot known as The Man Who Owns the Sky. He was the first to fly upside down. This experience may have been why Wayne dreamed of joining an aviation school. "There were several thousand soldiers camped on the ground for exhibition purposes. They gave a show battle in the evening, and fired several cannons and several ground mines. The agricultural exhibit did not approach the Washington County Fair exhibits in any way. They had very sorry corn. But the crowd was almost 100,000 some days. The street cars would become jammed and extend over a mile in close formation."¹⁰

Once, he took a steamer excursion down the Mississippi River. "There are heavy guards at both bridges over the Mississippi [due to WWI]." On another occasion, he wrote that he enjoyed his stay at the Hotel Mahoney in Little Rock, Arkansas, one block from Union Depot.

Progress is a compass that generally points towards speed and efficiency, and the railroad was ever-changing. He told his family that "Iron

Mountain will put on a new fast train St. Louis to Mexico City and California." He badly wanted to be a postal clerk working trains near the Mexico border and thought his services might be needed in 1916 when there was a possibility of war with Mexico. When that opportunity didn't pan out, he wrote to his Chief Clerk in 1917 "offering my services for duty as a Postal Clerk in France in the ocean mail service or anywhere I was needed." While these efforts failed, he was succeeding financially.

By 1916 he was earning \$40-60 per paycheck which amounted, in his records, to \$1,156.15 for the entire year (about \$28,000 in today's dollars). He frequently got raises for "faithful and efficient service." The cost of Wayne's food for an entire day in 1916 was the cost of today's postage stamp, around 55 cents. He mostly bought breakfast and supper, sometimes lunch. He often enjoyed treats such as candy, apples, or oranges which were all usually 5 cents each. Ice cream could be 35 cents. He once bought strawberries for 25 cents. On July 4th he paid a couple of dollars for a BBQ and 20 cents for balloons. Happily, grown men buying balloons for themselves was acceptable back in the day.

Wayne wrote of his job in the Sears-Roebucks Parcel Post with 1,600 – 1,800 men. "It takes 7 postal clerks to sack their mail, 800 or 900 sacks and parcels each day. They have a cafeteria for employees, spotlessly clean, well cooked. They charge cost only. Hot and cold water in wash basins. They furnish towels and electric fans and ice water for the men."

HOLIDAYS ON THE RAILWAY

During holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, Wayne was often away from his family. "As I was eating six o'clock dinner at the Senos Café in Adler Apartments in Memphis, I got to thinking where I had been the last few Thanksgivings. Three years ago I was at Hogeys, two years ago in Okmulgee, one year ago in Dallas, and last night in Memphis. For dinner last night I had Turkey broth, Rice soup, Roast young turkey, Oyster dressing, olive oil, fresh Sliced tomatoes, Salad dressing, Cranberry sauce, Tapioca Pudding, Hot Tea and Celery. But I did not enjoy it a bit more than the boiled cabbage I was eating at Hog Eye [sic] or many meals I have eaten on the old Farmstead [Farmhouse]."¹¹

Christmas was an extremely busy time to be a mail clerk. "Well I covered myself with glory during the Holiday Rush," Wayne wrote to his parents one Christmas. Five men were placed under Wayne's direct orders for a night shift. "The clerk in charge turned the department over to me without reservation, said we had done something no one else had ever done. Also the Division Superintendent made special mention of our prompt dispatch especially since the Ft. Worth Terminal was 24 hours late with all of their mail. So you see although I have been here only 6 months, I have taken rank with the best of them." He was very keen on sending home gifts for his family. Christmas gifts to his mother Rachel included a 1914 leather Davenport, still beloved in the Johnson Farmhouse front



Wayne and Wynnie Dea Dearing, in a photograph dated November 15, 1917. Photograph courtesy Anne Prichard.

room today. In 1916 he spent \$116.25 on Christmas presents, and he loved giving his family everything he could afford.

He had a poetic fondness for Sundays, and wrote letters especially remembering past Sundays that fell on October 1st. He reflected on Sunday, October 1st of 1905, 1911, and 1916. Autumn was just beginning, the weather was fine, and Sundays were usually an acceptable day of rest – and romance.

WAYNE & WYNNIE

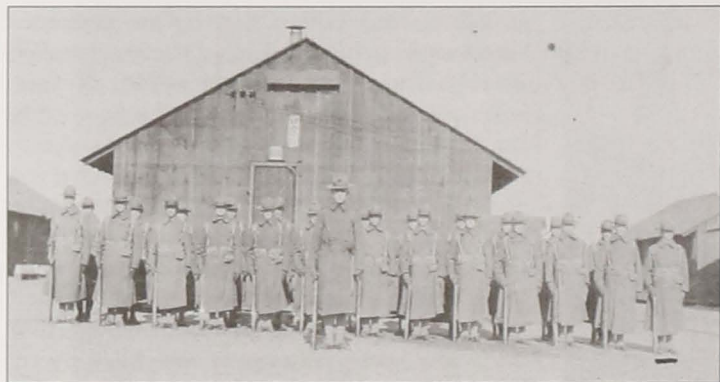
Wynnie Dea Dearing lived in Bald Knob and took Wayne on long drives. They were together every few days. “Believe me she is ‘some girl,’” Wayne wrote to Wilton in July 1917. “She took me automobiling Friday night about a 20 mile drive. She drives well. I bring her a box of candy every Sunday but it is certainly

worth it.” They would always eat at the hotel and have “quite a visit,” Wayne wrote.

Wayne and Wynnie shared “a very exclusive” Halloween party in 1917. He wrote to Wilton that they “made hot chocolate over her chafing dish, had sandwiches, grapes, fruit, candy and various other eats. I never had a more enjoyable time in my life.” Wynnie played piano for him as entertainment during his visits, and also taught piano lessons.

Wayne attended a “Pianoforte” recital for Wynnie’s piano students at the high school auditorium in Bald Knob on April 18, 1917. He often wrote warnings to his siblings not to become backwards like the “natives” of his rural neighborhood, and he valued attending performances. He seemed to yearn for a better education for himself, or of some wistful future career that he never exactly spelled out or acted upon. He wrote to his brother Wilton September 26, 1916: “It is very necessary these days that a successful man be perfectly at home in society as well as be perfectly equipped intellectually. This is one thing I have failed absolutely to do. However, on account of conditions and not desire.”

Wynnie’s shy, cute smile can be seen in many photographs in the archives at the Johnson farm. Wynnie and Wayne posed together on a woodpile and on the steps of a building, sweetly smiling at each other. Wayne was certainly transfixed, but did he propose marriage?



U.S. Marines 68th Drill Company A., Parris Island, South Carolina. Wayne Johnson is at the extreme right. Photograph courtesy Anne Prichard.

MARINE BROTHERS

Despite his delight in wandering, Wayne did get homesick. "I am surely getting anxious to get back home as I have been gone almost two years," he wrote to sister Eva on April 16, 1917. However, Wayne worked as a railway mail clerk until December 15, 1917 when he enlisted in the Marines in Memphis, Tennessee. He spent only one night with his parents at the family farm in Arkansas before leaving for the Marine training camp at Parris Island, South Carolina. That was the last time they would ever see their son.

Wayne was happy with his decision to join the Marines. "The Marines have the reputation of being the best drilled troops in the country, also the best riflemen," he wrote. "I am mighty glad I joined the Marines in preference to any other branch of the service."¹²

In December 1917, Wayne was mustered in as a member of the 68th Co. A. at Parris Island, South Carolina. His brother Wilton enlisted at St. Louis, Missouri, and was sent to Parris Island as a member of 64th Co. U.S. Marines. They shared 10 weeks of training there and were then sent to the military base at Quantico, Virginia. Wayne was a member of 134th Co. 2nd Division 5th Regiment, and Wilton was with 157th Co. 2nd Division 5th Regiment.

In Virginia, they were in for a surprise. There were two grey mules with distinctive white coats on the Johnson Farm, Bird and Belle. Each brother was allowed to choose which mule they would work with for farm labor. Belle was probably Wayne's. Both mules were sold and shipped out to help with the war effort. "I think our shipping Belle will do a great deal to hasten the end [of the war]" Wayne wrote to Wilton. Much to his surprise, Wilton saw both Belle and Bird at the Quantico, Virginia, Marines Military Base "hauling grand to fix up the camp!" This was an expression meaning that the mules were hauling wagons in a grand or hardworking way.



Wayne and sister Lenora goofing around. Photograph courtesy Anne Prichard.

Wayne and Wilton shared care packages. Wilton wrote to his family after they had mailed him a package. "Yes I got the apples all right. As Wayne was still in quarantine, I sent some to him. I got a box of candy from Lenora and sent him half also."¹³ Based on their letters home, you can imagine them trying not to get in trouble by exchanging glances as they marched past each other, and stealing conversation time whenever they could. It's like they had a magnet in their minds, pulling them together even though they had to stay apart. "After mail was called I went down to Wayne's bunk and we went over to the Y and had quite a talk." He didn't say what they talked about!

Wayne wrote to his mother Rachel on February 28, 1918, from Parris Island, South Carolina. "Wilton and I left the island for Quantico, Virginia. It seems so strange to me the way it all happened. Of course we did not know for sure

that we were going to the same place. We had been together all the day before and knew that we would soon be leaving the island. Our company was farthest from the docks, and as we marched past Wilton's bunkhouse, we exchanged glances of recognition. We marched out to the parade grounds and halted for a few minutes. Meanwhile, his company passed us and loaded onto a steamer at the docks and pulled out ahead of us. We followed in a high powered motor launch. We met up again at Port Royal and had quite a chat. On the train he was in the 4th car and I was in the 12th."

Wayne added, "Now don't tell Wilton this but honest, his company really thinks that I am younger than he is. Now aren't you surprised at that? But he has had a weight of responsibility thrust on him while I have been content to excel in my section of trench climbing and wall scaling and came out first in two trials the same evening." This "weight" that Wayne speaks of is Wilton's promotion to Gunnery Sergeant in the 5th Regiment 2nd Division.

LIFE IN THE MARINES

Wayne and Wilton wrote home on official stationery, their letters caked in grime and dirt (as though testament to where they were written). Wilton wrote home that they had been shipped overseas from Quantico. "We left Philadelphia March 14th on the S. S. Henderson. One shot was fired at a submarine on the trip. We landed March 27th at Brest, and went to some old Napoleon barracks for the night, then took a train for Champ Little where we arrived Easter Sunday and it was raining. We stayed here

4 or 5 days then hiked north into Haut [Haute] Marne district. My Co. was stopped at Conblanc, but Wayne's went to Grand Champ. At this time, the Marine Regiments were at the Verdun [Verdun] front and most of the men were transferred to the Regiments, but a few of us 'non coms' were held to train others coming over."

Care packages from home kept the men going. Wayne thanked his mother for a care package she had sent before they shipped overseas. "It was what I would call an ideal package. You know I always did like anything with raisins in it." And he didn't forget her on Mother's Day.

"My Dear Mama," Wayne wrote. "Today is Mother's Day and all the boys over here are writing home. I know you are expecting a letter from me so I want to tell you that I am getting along fine over here. I have plenty of good food to eat. I am well clothed and provided for in every respect. France is a most beautiful country and I have seen many picturesque old Chateaus and cathedrals since I have been here. The first trees are in bloom and they remind me of back home at this time of year. I saw Wilton a month ago today. He is in fine health and looking unusually well. I suppose he has written you that he has been promoted. With lots of love from your soldier boy, Private FWJ".

Occasionally, they enjoyed movies, shows and sports. Wilton wrote "We are having some regular sunny weather now, it's 'sunny France' sure enough. It's warm enough that we can go swimming and the stream is real close too." He mentioned that the water was often cool, though. "We had a ball game yesterday, Sergeants vs Corporals. It was some game believe me." They also got tours of various interesting places on their journey. "I went through a big chocolate factory the other day. About 1,600 girls and women work in the factory."

Over the many weeks in France, some of the Marines connected with the French and formed friendships and something akin to family relationships. "There's an old lady here that has taken up with me," Wilton explained. "She has me and another fellow fall in for chow at her house every once in awhile of evening. Their last home was destroyed by shells and I guess they had a rather narrow escape."¹⁴ He called her his "French mother" and wrote that "she looks after me pretty close. I work in her garden sometimes when I am off." The Americans would often lend a hand to the locals. "About 20 of us fellows helped a Frenchman put a roof on his house the other evening. They have tile roofs and it didn't take long."

The language barrier was ever the challenge. Wilton wrote that "I've run across some people that talk a little English so between their little English and my little French I don't have to talk with my hands so much." Apparently, the biggest challenge of all was not the language barrier nor the noise of the war. "The blooming bugs have been about to eat me up lately. They are worse than night air raids. I generally sleep through the raids but the bugs wake me up."¹⁵

Bugs weren't the only things "blooming." The blooming trees and

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U.S. Marines on a train to dedicate cemetery at Beaumont in France. This may be the Beaumont-Hamel British Cemetery, which is near the Somme. Photograph courtesy Anne Prichard.



flowers would often remind them of home. "There is a baby rambler rose bush out the window from where I am now that looks just like the one on the front porch at home."¹⁶

After a major battle, the surviving Marines would find things to take back home. "Some of the fellows picked up souvenirs of all kinds: helmets, pistols, watches, belt buckles etc." Wayne was mostly mum about life, writing that he was well fed and healthy and not to worry about him. Wilton was the wordier brother, telling stories with detail. He described a village of dugouts in the trenches. "Some of the dugouts were real homes. Some of them had phonographs, pianos. One had a bowling alley and a beer garden." He joked about his own little hole of a house and described its sparse features and fortifications with good humor. But life was harsh. "You should be around camp awhile and hear some of the fellows tell their tales. They make the old civil war stories sound like nursery tales."

Times looked bleak for Wilton in July of 1918. Although no official word of Wayne's death had reached the family, Wilton was beginning to realize his brother was gone forever. But he kept his spirits up. "Yes it's true what you hear of the fellows singing, laughing and joking over here, and even more so. It's the only way to keep spirits up you know. Even when things are going bad you have to keep up a front. One fellow said the other day that nothing ever put more heart in him than when he was under heavy shell fire to see the fellow just ahead roll over, look back, shut one eye and smile."¹⁷

BRAVE AND GAME TO THE END

Wayne's last letter home was May 19, 1918 (another special Sunday for Wayne). He mentioned that he found it interesting to attend services at an old French cathedral, ever the explorer when it came to religion. Wilton later wrote home about the brothers' movements in France. "Early in June the Regiments were transferred from Verdin [Verdun] to Chateau Thierry, and we were sent to Norsel, about 16 miles from Paris. Here we did replacement work for the First Army Corps. Our Co. handled the men of the 4th and 42nd (Rainbow Division). There we got the full

benefit of the night raids on Paris, as the planes followed the Marne river getting to Paris. We could also hear guns at Soissons [Soissons] and Château Thierry easily." Those guns were pointed at Wayne.

The Marines were about to make history in June 1918. Many hundreds of Marines were mowed down as they advanced through waist-high wheat fields. Mustard gas filled the air with yellow smoke. The woods were pocketed with German machine gun nests, some of which were taken by surprise by the Americans, who had to fight in hand-to-hand combat with bayonets and fists. In the early morning of June 25th, just one day before the Marines' legendary victory, Wayne was killed by either a rifle or machine gun bullet while going over the top in an attack which drove the Germans from Belleau Woods near Château-Thierry, France. The wood was later renamed to Bois de la Brigade de Marine to honor their sacrifice. The Germans called these Marines "devil dogs" due to their fierce fighting. Wilton wrote home that Wayne "was brave and game to the end."

It was not the end of Wilton's war nightmare. He had just learned that he had lost his brother; now, he had to go to the front for the first time.

"In August, we were sent to the 6th Reg Marines. My first turn at the front was at St. Michael. There the 2nd Div attacked on September 12. On September 15 we had it pretty hot, but were relieved that night. Later we were sent to the Champagne front to help the French. On October 3rd our Batt. led off in the attack and capture of Mont Blanc. We were transferred back to the American Army and ordered to the Argonne front. On November 1st, our Div attacked and advanced 9 kilos. Two days later we again advanced and were 8 kilos ahead of either flank. On the night of November 10 we again attacked, and the show stopped November 11th."

But even while all that was going on, Wilton had a promise to keep. "While we were on Parris Island Wayne used to talk much of Wynn timer and while he never said they were engaged, I drew my own conclusions. After we got over and we realized that we would probably be separated he asked me to go down around Bald Knob [where Wynn timer lived] in case I ever got to go back." In September 1918, he kept his promise and wrote to Wynn timer to inform her of Wayne's death. A few months later, on December 30, 1918, she married another WWI veteran, Clark Milburn Sanders, at Woodruff, Arkansas. They were married for 50 years and had no children. Wynn timer continued to teach piano lessons and worked as a housekeeper for a lumber company. Clark died in April of 1968 and Wynn timer followed him in July.¹⁸

And what about these brothers' white-coated mules? "By the way would you believe it, I saw old Bird a couple of days after peace was declared way up close to the front," Wilton reported after the Armistice in November 1918. "She was one of a farm mule team on a ration wagon. Looked good all right." Two brothers and their mules went to serve, and one brother and his mule saw peace.

It took almost a year for Wilton to be allowed to return home after occupying Rheinbrohl, Germany, for many months. It took four years for Wayne's body to return to Fayetteville. According to the archive paper trail, he was temporarily buried with others in the field, then moved to a separate grave in an American Cemetery "in Commune of Belleau, Aisne, France." The French government banned repatriating bodies from January 1919 to January 1922. Once the ban was lifted, there was some difficulty in identifying Wayne's remains with confidence, so in May 1922, the Marine Corps requested Wayne's dentist send a dental chart. This was promptly done, and by August, his remains were identified and the body prepared for shipment to the United States. His sister Eva met his casket in New York City and accompanied it on the train to Fayetteville, with transportation expenses covered by the military.

During the afternoon of September 25, 1922, Wayne's remains were buried in the Fayetteville National Cemetery, plot 13, 0, 1338. "Cha-teau-Thierry Hero Buried Here Today," read the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* headline. "The body of Frederick Wayne Johnson, son of Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Johnson who reside at Rieff's Chapel near here, was brought here for burial in National Cemetery this afternoon when it was accorded military honors by members of the Lynn Shelton Post, American Legion. Services were conducted by Rev. W. R. Russell of Everton, MO, a friend of the deceased for many years." Burial expenses were \$22.50 and reimbursed by the government. Wayne's monument appears a little taller and different from the others at the site. Once home in 1919, Wilton dedicated a photo album to Wayne "who paid the Big Price in the War for Humanity." Several of Wilton's photos are included here.

THE MURAL, PART II

"In 1920, the Daughters of the American Revolution commissioned New York artist William Steene to paint a mural honoring those Washington County men who died during the recent World War. The central figure in the mural is the Angel of Victory, who represents the Womanhood of America and Washington County. She holds two tablets inscribed with the names of those Washington County men who gave their lives during the 'War for Human Rights.'"¹⁹

Frederick Wayne Johnson, mail clerk and Marine, is one of the 53 little universes named in this mural. Few people pass it, and even fewer will read it and know who he was, but that's ok. His legacy is subtle and widespread, felt not in fame but in the daily interactions of our present world. His birthday is still not among the notable ones in the newspapers, but his universe is entwined within our own.

"Remember, nothing is impossible where there is relentless determination to succeed."²⁰

— Frederick Wayne Johnson

Endnotes

¹ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wayne Johnson to brother Wilton, July 11, 1917.

² Johnson Family Papers, Wayne Johnson diary, 1912-1913.

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⁷ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wayne Johnson to father Benjamin Franklin Johnson II, 1916.

⁸ James Felix Owens birth certificate, census records, death certificate. Accessed at Ancestry.com.

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¹⁰ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wayne Johnson to family November 2, 1914.

¹¹ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wayne Johnson to family November 26, 1915.

¹² Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wayne Johnson to Rachel Johnson, March 16, 1918.

¹³ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wilton Johnson to Family, January 4, 1918.

¹⁴ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wilton Johnson to Rachel, May 29, 1918.

¹⁵ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wilton Johnson to Rachel, June 30, 1918.

¹⁶ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wilton Johnson to Rachel, June 16, 1918.

¹⁷ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wilton Johnson to Rachel, July 25, 1918.

¹⁸ Wynnie Dea Dearing and Clark Milburn Sanders census records, etc. Accessed at Ancestry.com

¹⁹ Tony Wappel, "The Historic Washington County Court House," *Flashback*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (Spring 2005), pp. 51-84.

²⁰ Johnson Family Papers, Letter from Wayne Johnson to brother Wilton, December 28, 1914.



Lynchings and Racial Terror in Pre-Civil War Washington County

This article is reprinted here courtesy of Elder Mountain: A Journal of Ozarks Studies, published by Missouri State University, where it first appeared in the July 17, 2021 online edition.

By J.B. Hogan

After the Civil War, lynchings, primarily of African Americans and typically done by mobs of white people, were common. From 1877-1950, nearly 4,000 African Americans were lynched in the United States, some 500 taking place in Arkansas.¹ It is somewhat surprising then that none have been documented in Washington County during that time; however, several lynchings in the county prior to the Civil War have been noted by journalists and historians.

In 1840, for example, Caroline, an enslaved woman, was charged with the death of her “mistress,” the wife of Andrew Crawford who would later be a county judge. After morning chores were done, Caroline, as was usual, went to help Crawford in the field, but she warned him that a “tramp” had been at the house with possible “evil intentions” toward Mrs. Crawford.²

Crawford ignored the warning but at lunchtime found his wife’s body “bleeding and mangled” by the fire. After a brief, futile search for the tramp, suspicion turned to Caroline who was “examined and blood was

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found upon her clothes.”³ The “men of the community held a court” (the Sheriff was absent), appointed a judge and jury, and condemned the slave woman to hang.⁴ A make-shift gallows was hastily erected between “two dogwood trees” with the enslaved woman standing at the back of a wagon. She was reportedly denied a final drink of water and summarily hanged.⁵

An 1849 case involved a Benton County enslaved man named Alph who was accused of killing his “master,” James Anderson, in the Vache Grasse area southeast of Fort Smith. Because of some unspecified impropriety, Anderson had decided to sell Alph, separating the enslaved man from his wife who remained in Benton County.⁶

The killing occurred on Saturday, August 4, but Anderson’s body, head bashed in by a club and “throat cut from ear to ear,” was found the following Tuesday by a party from Fayetteville headed by Alfred M. Wilson, prominent lawyer and early settler.⁷

On the day after the killing, Sunday, August 5, Alph was noticed in Fayetteville riding Anderson’s horse and wearing the dead man’s clothes. After supposedly telling several local slaves and at least one free man of color about his deed, Alph managed to ride out of Fayetteville before a hastily formed posse could locate and capture him.⁸

The posse pursued Alph and shot him twice, in the hip and shoulder, but he initially eluded them. He was finally apprehended and was in custody for three days in Fayetteville before he was taken back to Benton County where he was said to have admitted to the murder. At the last he cried out and pointed to a white man in the crowd who he said “instigated him,” but he was hanged without trial or due process on October 20, 1849.⁹

In 1856 a trio of enslaved men was hanged in Fayetteville for the murder of James Boone, a prominent landowner from near modern-day Elkins. The enslaved men, Anthony, Aaron, and Randall, were charged with Boone’s death. A trial was held in circuit court from June 30 through July 7.¹⁰

Anthony was acquitted, and prosecutors chose not to pursue charges against Aaron, effectively freeing both men. However, a white mob, led by Boone’s sons, took Anthony and Aaron from jail, where they had remained in custody after their trials, and lynched both men on July 7, 1856. Randall was then convicted of the murder. Despite an appeal, which was denied, Randall was hanged by the State of Arkansas on August 1, 1856.¹¹

In 2021, the Washington County Community Remembrance Project, working with the Equal Justice Initiative, had a plaque placed in Oaks Cemetery, Fayetteville’s traditional African American cemetery, to commemorate and venerate Randall, Anthony, and Aaron.

There was also a lynching in the spring of 1860. An enslaved man named Horace was charged with the killing of his “master,” 74-year-old Jacob Mullis. Mullis and his young wife, Emily, lived with the enslaved

Horace in Mountain Township near the community of Hogeys.¹²

This sensational case not only involved a murder but also rumored miscegenation, at the time an offense “too revolting to mention.” Mullis’ wife Emily was only 36 years old and there was talk that she and Horace had become “intimate.” Some believed that Emily “influenced” Horace to kill her husband. Horace claimed that he had killed Mullis in self-defense and “went willingly to the Fayetteville jail without a struggle.”¹³

When word spread throughout Fayetteville of the killing, a mob of white people, after discussing the matter, became “enraged, and dreading the escape of the murderer or disliking too long a delay of justice to him” stormed the jail to get at Horace. Emily Mullis was said to have “pleaded to prevent the lynching,” but the mob took Horace from the jail and “hung him to a limb.”¹⁴

At least three more pre-Civil War cases of racial terror should be mentioned. In 1841, Nelson Hackett, an enslaved man, escaped from Fayetteville and made it all the way to the supposed safe haven of Canada. He was tracked down, however, by agents of his enslavers and brought back to Arkansas. The incident resulted in a well-documented and contentious international case involving the United States and the British government which, of course, reigned over Canada. Hackett was eventually sent to Texas and vanished from history.¹⁵

In a case that highlights the fragility of being a free Black person in a slave-holding state, in 1849, John Smith, who was a free man, was accused of murder (the victim was not identified). Fortunately, Smith had some rights as a free man and was acquitted of the charge.¹⁶ Four years later, an enslaved man named Aldred was accused of being responsible for his mother’s death. According to a *New York Times* article from the following year, Aldred was convicted of “killing his mother” and then “promptly hanged.”¹⁷

No cases of outright lynching in Washington County after the Civil War have yet been found, but several incidents seem to come close to that label or at least indicate the underlying fear of such among the county’s Black population. For example, in the 1910s (specific date not given), a Black man named Gibb was shot by a white man while they were playing dice. The shooter was charged with “firing [a] weapon inside the city” and fined 10 dollars.¹⁸

In 1927, a man named Joshua Thompson was shot dead by “Constable Sam”¹⁹ for stealing a sack of chicken feed. Local attorney J. Wythe Walker, commented: “I don’t believe that any man should be killed over a six-bit [75 cents] tow-sack full of chops” [chicken feed].²⁰ And in a 1928 case in which Everett Williams, a Black man, killed Fayetteville Black patrolman Lem McPherson in a deadly gun battle, Williams – who had managed to escape twice from authorities – finally surrendered, but only after he was convinced he would not be the victim of a “mobbing.”²¹ Lynchings were still a common enough event that Williams was clearly

and profoundly afraid of turning himself in because he might become yet another victim of extra-legal mob violence.

That other incidents of racial terror and violence have occurred in Washington County in the 150 years since emancipation seems a certainty. More research into the topic will be necessary to reveal these as yet hidden cases as the nation continues to deal with its racially charged history that has so often been ignored or simply avoided.

Endnotes

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¹⁶*Goodspeed*, pp. 159-160.

¹⁷McConnell, "Killings," p. 15.

¹⁸*Goodspeed*, p. 160.

¹⁹*Bullets and Fire: Lynching and Authority in Arkansas, 1840-1950*, ed., Guy Lancaster. (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2018), p. 27.

²⁰*Arkansas Gazette*, August 16, 1849, p. 2.

²¹*Bullets and Fire*, p. 27.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

²³McConnell, "Killings," p. 16. This case is discussed in several other issues of *Flashback*, among other sources, including the April 1960 and Autumn 2006 issues.

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²⁵Denele Campbell, *Murder in the County: 50 True Stories of the Old West* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform: July 12, 2017), p. 106.

²⁶*Bullets and Fire*, p. 22.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Internet web site. Accessed July 14, 2021, at <https://nelsonhackettproject.uark.edu/>.

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³¹Charles M. Wantuck, "Do You Remember When?" *Flashback*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (February 1993), p. 15.

³²"Constable Sam" is likely Sam Guinn, who served as Washington County Sheriff from 1921-1923 and again in 1929-1930. Washington County website, "Sheriffs of Washington County," internet page. Accessed July 14, 2021, at <https://www.washingtoncountyar.gov/government/departments-f-z/sheriff/sheriffs-of-washington-county>.

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³⁴J. B. Hogan, "Tragedy in Tin Cup," *Flashback*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Summer 2006), p. 125.



“Roses Were Everywhere”

A landscape of the Tebbetts property prior to the Civil War

By Lee Anne K. Wiederkehr

Marian Tebbetts Banes, the second child of Judge Jonas March Tebbetts and Matilda Winlock Tebbetts, described the property of her childhood home as “a four-acre square lot on the northeast edge of town”.¹ The town of Fayetteville, established in 1828, had a thriving population of 1,200 to 1,500 by the 1840s² in the frontier state of Arkansas. “The house faced south. To the east of the house and well back were the stables with a lane running from [Dickson] street to the stables. In front of the stables, and east of the Hawthorn hedge, were fruit trees and on the other, toward town, was an open space of grass and back of that was the grove.”³

Richard Sheridan, ASLA, prepared the first drawing of the Headquarters House grounds in 1980. Professor Sheridan mapped the grounds⁴ early in his career and based his research largely on *The Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes*, Judge Tebbetts’ oldest daughter. The journal was completed by Marian’s 90th birthday in 1940 and published by Washington County Historical Society in 1977. Sheridan was an assistant professor and acting department chair of landscape architecture, School of Architecture at the University of Arkansas, from 1977 until 1980 when the department graduated its first class of landscape architecture students. Without him, the department might not exist today. The Sheridan chil-

Lee Anne Kirby Wiederkehr, ASLA, is a landscape architect serving the Washington County Historical Society as chair of the Garden & Grounds Committee and collaborates with the UA Master Gardeners to interpret the Headquarters House historic landscape. Lee Anne & her husband, Mike, are Arkansas natives who spent their careers in California. They are happy to call Fayetteville home.

dren were born in Fayetteville, as were the Tebbetts children, and Fayetteville continues to be a special place for Richard and his wife, Diane. The Sheridans have lived in Rhode Island since 2005 where Richard serves as the department chair and professor in landscape architecture at the University of Rhode Island.

Sheridan wrote about the significance of the Headquarters House landscape:

While the house itself is of great importance and interest to many people, the surrounding landscape, which has many traces of the original landscape treatments so typical during the time of the Civil War, is of equal interest....Landscape elements...have been fairly well documented in *Marian Tebbetts Banes' Journal*, CR 1977, and [in] other sources. This historic documentation and on-site indications such as depressions and the arrangement of existing elements (trees, buildings, etc.) can be interpreted by a professional with expertise in historic landscape restoration, preservation, and ethnobotany. This interpretation will lead to a plan for restoration.

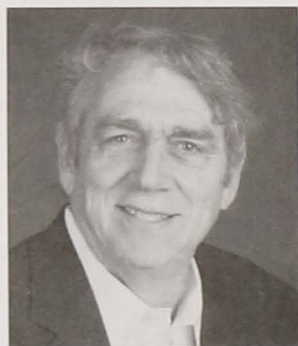
By drawing plans for a restoration of the property and documenting what it looked like in 1855-1865, visitors can identify changes in the objectives for the residential landscape over the years in Arkansas. For example, during 1855 to 1865, the major objective was to have activities such as gardens, stables, and orchards in close proximity to the living quarters....The landscape treatment around a building is a definite reflection of the period and the owner as much as the architecture or the furnishings....⁵

In the words of Marian Tebbetts Banes:

The 'new place' fell into beautiful and graceful lines. Everything was so calm and peaceful. It is a pity everyone has not as peaceful and abundant a childhood to look back upon as was found here⁶

A number of plants that grew in the garden during Marian's childhood were identified in her journal. For instance, the Tebbetts family maintained a double perennial border along the front walk as represented on the grounds today. Marian wrote,

Mysteriously, a hedge of Red Haw sprang into place to shut off the back and a wide bordered walk ran from the front door to the gate. About fifteen feet from the portico, curved sidewalks led from the main walk to openings in the hedge on each side of the house. Each side of the walks were finished with flowerbeds. Tiger Lilies grew, and the White Lilies, and the Phlox and Heather Bells and the Smoky Hyacinths and Canterbury Bells and Verbenas and Clove Pinks and the Columbine, both native and blue, and the Lupines. Those were for Father, as the flower of his childhood [in New Hampshire].



Richard Sheridan, ASLA.
Photograph courtesy
Richard Sheridan.

Halfway between the house and the gate, were the frames for the Coral Honeysuckle and the Black Honeysuckle. Roses seemed to be everywhere. The great "Giant of Bottles" grew near Mother's window, but several plants of the Hermosa [Rose] were near the Honeysuckles.⁷

Marian Tebbetts Banes notes in her journal that "roses were everywhere" in the garden. We know that the fragrant Hermosa Rose was planted at the Tebbetts House in the mid-1800s near "Mother's Room." Early settlers left testimony about the need for beauty even in the most rugged human existence – hence, the popular planting of the rose.

LANDSCAPE & OUTBUILDINGS – PRACTICAL PURPOSE

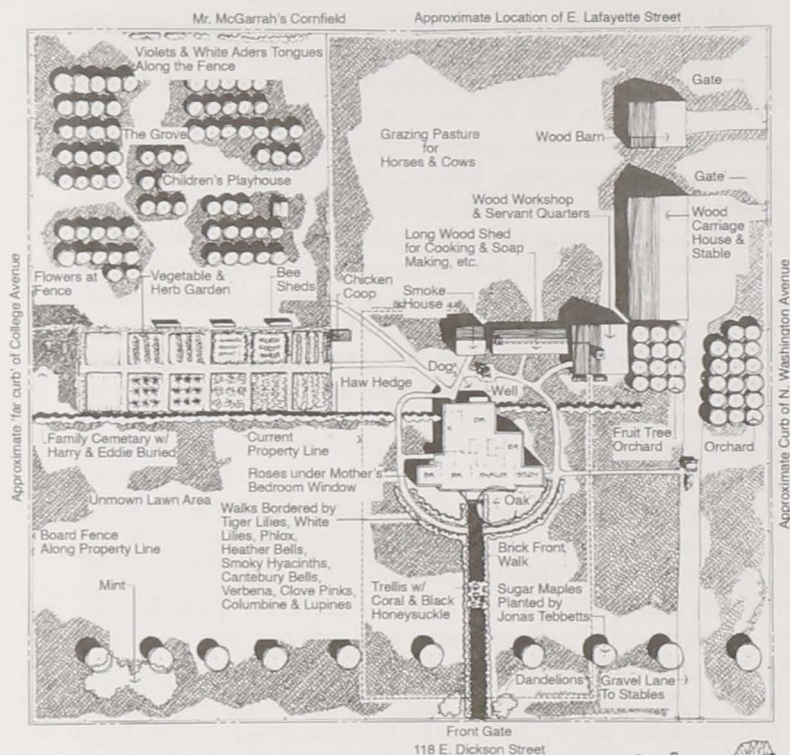
Land was necessary to sustain family life which is evident from the size of the Tebbetts' 4-acre lot as well as the garden elements documented on Sheridan's landscape plan. A well supplied water for the family and livestock. Stables housed the horses that provided the family's transportation, horses and cows grazed in the meadow, cows were milked to provide milk, butter, and cream, and the family grew vegetables, herbs, and fruit in the gardens and orchards. Waste was disposed of in outhouses, compost, or burned.

Outbuildings provided places to make products the family used such as soap and to repair equipment. Fruits and vegetables were canned and stored in the basement for times when the gardens and orchards were fallow. Land provided space to split logs for fuel and a place to slaughter animals. In the smokehouse, meats were smoked for preservation and stored. Chickens roosted in the coop where eggs were collected and fresh protein was kept "on foot." The bricks of the walk and the smokehouse were made of clay excavated from the basement of the house, built on a native stone foundation. One can imagine a place teeming with activity to support a dozen people and livestock.

Marian describes:

Back of the house was a brick smoke house, and a rather large frame building that was called the workshop, because maybe, the main room contained a carpenter's work bench and all kinds of tools. Smaller rooms were used for servants' sleeping quarters, and two upstairs rooms were used for storage and things in general. Between these two houses was a long-shed room in which was a built-in fire-place or oven of brick, which held two large iron kettles. There the washing was done [using soap from] barrels of soft soap made during "hog-killing time" [when] great crocks of lard [were] rendered. That was a convenience born of Father's New England training. Such things in...the country was generally accomplished in the open – a kettle being set on three stones with a fire built beneath. This oven was smilingly called "one of Tebbetts' Yankee contraptions", but Mother was very proud of it.⁸

Landscape of the Tebbetts Property

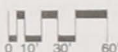


FUNDED BY THE ARKANSAS
ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES.

FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT: RICHARD SHERIDAN
ILLUSTRATOR: SCOTT N. COLLARD
RESEARCH ASSISTANT: LEE ANN KIRBY

HEADQUARTERS HOUSE



Front of House from Dickson Street

The above landscape plan, prepared in 1980 by Richard Sheridan, ASLA, illustrates the Tebbetts' property prior to the Civil War. The house, just right of center, is surrounded by flower, vegetable, and herb gardens, orchards, a pasture, and outbuildings. The house is now the Headquarters House Museum and office of the Washington County Historical Society. Plan courtesy of Richard Sheridan.

THE GROVE

The grove! Ah! The grove! It belonged to us children, all except where the sheds for the beehives were strung along the garden fence.

The four acres were without trees save the grove and one big oak that stood at the east corner of the portico. What a noise the katydids made there on a summer night, and how Father used to go down the steps and hammer on the tree to stop their racket. Why this one tree and the grove were left is a question, but the fact remains that excepting young trees planted by Father, they were all that were on the 4-acre lot.

Roughly speaking, the grove must have been about three-quarters of an acre square. There was the children's play house, their play things. Hale's great rope swing in which, standing, he could "work up" until he was horizontal with the tree. There was also a smaller swing for Eddie and me... Delightful memories of childhood are connected to the grove. Violets grew there and sometimes in the spring were found lovely, lovely White Adders-Tongues along the back fence, and occasionally a Yellow Violet. That necessitated a run to the house to show Mother.

Eddie and Harry were buried as there was no cemetery...the two little boys were laid to rest in a beautiful lot back of the garden. Hale and I often played around Harry's and Eddie's graves. We took our playmates and playthings there, and planted flowers without thought of superstitious fear.⁹

VEGETABLE GARDEN

The [vegetable] garden was laid in geometric lines – the beds planked in, and flowers planted along the fence. Hale's and my flower garden was there where we often played.¹⁰

Families usually planted two vegetable garden crops each year – one in the spring to supply greens, peas, and radishes, and another in the summer to grow heartier vegetables such as pumpkins, beans, potatoes, and squash. Bountiful gardens required constant vigilance against gophers, deer, bears, crows, and a host of other invaders that found the vegetables as tasty as did the gardeners. Strong-smelling herbs, marigolds, nasturtium, nepata (catmint), and "furry-leafed" plants such as lamb's ear were planted to repel bugs, birds, rabbits, and deer. Following is a partial list of heirloom vegetables typical of mid-1800s gardens:

Beans - snap bush, snap pole, dry and
field beans shelled after they dry

Beets
Cabbage
Carrots
Cantaloupe
Corn, Sweet
Cucumbers
Lettuce
Musk Melon
Okra

Onions - red, yellow and white
Peanuts
Peas
Peppers
Potatoes
Pumpkin
Radishes
Squash - summer, acorn
Tomatoes

HERB GARDEN

Medicines were commonly compounds made from herbs grown in gardens by the family and servants. In addition to what they grew, people looked to the "resources of the southern fields and forests" for indigenous plant remedies.¹¹

Described below are a few common Medicinal Herbs:

Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*). Controlled bleeding and helped heal broken bones. Ointments to treat the skin made from combining comfrey with dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*).

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). A powerhouse of nutrition and medicine. In Civil War field hospitals, a highly concentrated tea was given to the wounded to relax them; made from fresh roots before the plant had gone to seed. One half cup of dandelion greens contains 122 percent of U.S. recommended daily allowance of vitamins and minerals.

Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*). Used in a poultice for wounds, pleurisy, and arthritis.

Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*). Used as a tea, pipe tobacco, and antiseptic.

Lamb's Ear (*Stachys lanata*). Well before there were Band-Aids, people used plants to bandage wounds. Fresh juice of the leaves seeps into the wound to help protect against infection. Lamb's ear can be used as toilet paper and was often grown around outhouses.

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*). Aroma-therapeutic calming effect. Good insect repellent and antiseptic.

Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*). Warmed leaves used to treat gout. Leaves used as bandages. Mullein can be used as toilet paper and was often grown around outhouses.

Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*). Used as air freshener, in disinfectants, and shampoos.

Rue (*Ruta graveolens*). A good insect repellent and antiseptic.

Sage (*Salvia officinalis*). Made into tea to treat colds.

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*). Used primarily to treat "rotten or filthy ulcers" of the skin, flesh wounds, or to help pass kidney stones.

Sweet Annie (*Artemisia annua*). Used in treating malaria and fever.

Thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*). A good antiseptic and insect repellent.

Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). Used to regulate fevers, pack wounds, and help stop bleeding.

DANDELION STORY

Mrs. Tebbetts had a special love for the color yellow and brought plants, albeit some invasive, to her garden from the love of her childhood memories as demonstrated by the Dandelion story:

Down by the [front] gate, out in the grass, was a dandy lion plant – one dandy lion plant. Mother, Matilda Winlock Tebbetts, was a Kentucky girl. In Kentucky, roadways and lawns were covered with dandy lions, but she had never seen one in Arkansas. There may have been millions of dandy lions scattered over the state but never had she seen one. So she saw dandy lions blooming on the roadway when visiting Missouri, stopped the wagon, and all got out to admire the lovely golden flowers....She arranged with Mr. Waters to take up some of the plants on his return trip and bring them back to Fayetteville and plant them down by the front gate at the new house. One plant lived

and bloomed and the neighbors came to see and to admire.¹²

The neighbors came to see and admire it. Mr. Quisenbury hovered over the dandylion plant, and said, "Remember, Mrs. Tebbetts, the seeds from this bloom are mine. You have promised; don't forget." This is an absolute true story, verified by many recollections of it by different old members of the family, especially when the beautiful, troublesome things were being painfully eradicated from later home lawns in Fayetteville.¹³

TEBBETTS FAMILY

As the youngest of 10 children, Jonas Tebbetts traveled west to make his way in life and began learning to become a lawyer at 19 after arriving in the Arkansas frontier in 1939, three years after statehood in 1836. Within five years, he achieved enough success to consider taking a bride. Soon after, he met Matilda visiting her sister in Van Buren from Kentucky. Jonas became smitten and asked for Matilda's hand. They were married within the year and moved to Fayetteville immediately after marrying on April 19, 1847.¹⁴

The history of the ages of the family members provides more context for the place as well as their experience of the Civil War and resulting displacement.

Judge Jonas March Tebbetts (b. January 5, 1820, Rochester, New Hampshire; d. 1914) and his wife Matilda Jane Winlock (b. February 7, 1830, Palmyra, Missouri; d. 1892). Both are buried in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. The couple had six children, all born in Fayetteville: Clinton Hale Tebbetts, 1848-1920; Marian Tebbetts Banes, 1850-1941; Eddie Tebbetts, ~1851-1855 (4 years old, buried in The Grove, Fayetteville); Lillian Tebbetts Galey, 1856-1930; Harry Tebbetts, 1859-1860 (18 months old, buried in The Grove, Fayetteville); and Annie Tebbetts, 186? (dates uncertain). Eddie and Harry's bodies were moved from the family cemetery near The Grove to eternally rest with their parents.¹⁵

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE FOR HEADQUARTERS HOUSE MUSEUM

In February 1862, Judge Tebbetts' estate was confiscated; he was arrested and thrust into prison in Fort Smith under sentence of hanging for his Unionist views. Union General Alexander Asboth occupied their house as his headquarters starting in February 1862¹⁶ during the American Civil War (April 12, 1861-April 9, 1865).

Times were terrifying. Fayetteville had been burned by the Confederates. The Headquarters House was likely saved due to General Asboth's presence. Matilda and the four children were alone in the house with two servants and the general's troops sleeping on the grounds.

Mother had Harris [the servant] take tubs of water to the gate, where we children handed it out by gourd and cupsful which the men drank greedily, some lying down by the tubs as if the acme of

desire had been reached....The place was overrun. Exhausted men fell within the line of the fence, thankful for a corner in which to lie and not be trampled. The porches were covered. Their groans and curses and prayers could be heard all night.¹⁷

Immediately after the Battle of Pea Ridge (March 7-8, 1862), the Confederates released Judge Tebbetts who returned to Fayetteville. Shortly after, President Lincoln appointed Tebbetts to the Direct Tax Commission for Arkansas behind Confederate lines. Tebbetts found it necessary to escape to Springfield, Missouri, by June 1862, never to return. The family joined the Judge in Missouri by November 1862.¹⁸

Union Colonel M. LaRue Harrison occupied Headquarters House after General Asboth and left shortly after the Battle of Fayetteville on April 18, 1863. Confederate General W. L. Cabel then occupied the house until Union troops returned in September 1863.

Headquarters House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 for its contribution to Military & Social History. The Headquarters House became a museum after the house was purchased by the Washington County Historical Society on August 18, 1967.

Endnotes

¹*The Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes* (Fayetteville, AR: Washington County Historical Society, 1977), p. 46.

²*Ibid.*, p. 38.

³*Ibid.*, p. 57

⁴Plan by Richard Sheridan, Landscape Architect; Illustrator: Scott N. Collard; Research Assistant: Lee Anne Kirby, Funded by Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities for the Washington County Historical Society, 1980.

⁵Richard Sheridan, Landscape Architect, Arkansas Endowment for the Humanities Grant Proposal, unpublished, June 17, 1980.

⁶*The Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes*, p. 56.

⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 57, 58

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 57

¹¹Patricia B. Mitchell, *Civil War Plants and Herbs* (P.B. Mitchell: 1996), p. 2.

¹²*The Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes*, p. 56

¹³*Ibid.*, pp. 71, 72

¹⁴Headquarters House Official Souvenir, WCHS, 1968.

¹⁵Headquarters House Official Souvenir, WCHS, 1968; also *The Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes*.

¹⁶Headquarters House Official Souvenir, WCHS, 1968.

¹⁷*The Journal of Marian Tebbetts Banes*, pp. 100-101

¹⁸Headquarters House Official Souvenir, WCHS, 1968.



Mary Celestia Parler Randolph

*Collector of Arkansas folklore
and dedicated UofA teacher*

This article is an edited excerpt of "Mary Celestia Parler (1904-1981): Folklorist and Teacher," reprinted with permission of the University of Georgia Press (Athens, Georgia), from the book Arkansas Women: Their Lives and Times (copyright 2018).

By Rachel Reynolds

Often, those who have made significant contributions receive only posthumous attention. Mary Celestia Parler, a University of Arkansas professor and avid collector and scholar of the oral traditions of the Ozarks, is one such example. While she was not unknown in her lifetime, Parler is someone whose contributions were not fully appreciated until after her death. Indeed, the South Carolina native was a legendary presence on the UofA campus throughout the 1950s and 1960s, even garnering brief exposure on the nationally televised CBS series "The Search," but her work as a folklore collector and scholar was often overshadowed by that of her more famous husband, Vance Randolph, and by such nationally renowned collectors as John Ruby Lomax.¹

Still, during her 27-year career at the UofA, she and her students assembled the largest cultural collection of sound recordings, texts, photographs, and ephemera from Arkansas and the Ozark Mountains. In addition, she participated actively in the formation of the Arkansas Folk-

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Mary Celestia Parler with recording equipment and typewriter for transcribing tapes. Mary Celestia Parler Papers Folder 1, Item 3. UofA Folklore Collection, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville.

lore Society, serving as its secretary-treasurer at the outset and later as archivist.² She and Randolph were both mentors to Max Hunter, whose own important collection of Ozark folk songs covered the same region and extended to Missouri and Oklahoma, but Parler's work included more than just songs and is much larger overall.³

Parler was a lifelong learner and a dedicated teacher to thousands of UofA students.

In the years since her death in 1981, the importance of her work on all these fronts has become increasingly apparent to a great many more people than those who knew her as a scholar, teacher, folklorist, and friend.

Mary Celestia Parler was born October 6, 1904, in Wedgefield, a small village near Sumter, South Carolina, the daughter of Dr. Marvin Lamar Parler, a country physician, and Josie Platt Parler, a local historian, writer, and teacher.⁴ She studied English literature at Winthrop College in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Chaucer at the University of Wisconsin, graduating in 1925 with a master's in English literature, and later began work on a PhD in English literature.⁵ (additional work at the University of South Carolina, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Brown and Columbia universities.) Parler taught at several schools around the South before joining the UofA as an associate professor of English in 1948.⁶

At Arkansas, she taught classes in folklore and Chaucer where she became known to her students as "Miss Chaucer" due to her lively analysis of the material and her love for it, which carried over into her flamboyant teaching style.⁷ She was often seen in class or sauntering around campus in a beret with a cigarette firmly perched between her lips.⁸ Part of her UofA distinction would always be that of "campus character."⁹

An English department colleague described Parler as "a special kind of female ... independent, outspoken, able to tell the phony from the real ... a product of the old South. In spite of her bluntness, her emotional ups and downs, her almost scandalous behavior at times, she was a lady with a generous heart."¹⁰



Parler, coming from what was considered a privileged background for a woman of her time, was seen as somewhat of a lovable and admirable oddity by her students. It was a rarity to see a highly educated woman living independently and working in the realm of academia in Northwest Arkansas. Her sparkling personality and candor endeared her not only to the subjects of her work at the university but also to her fellow faculty. It is likely, however, that her boldness somewhat inhibited the longevity of her program at the UofA and the support that it received from the university's administration over time.



Vance Randolph in Otto Ernest Rayburn's Book Store, Eureka Springs, 1948. Mary Celestia Parler Papers (MC 1501, Box 9, File 6). UofA Folklore Collection, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville

She was soon asked to become involved in the formation of the Ozark Folklore Society (later renamed the Arkansas Folklore Society) and to become its secretary-treasurer.¹¹ This group of people proved instrumental in encouraging her in her endeavors to collect Arkansiana. According to Parler, when she came to Fayetteville, she knew the names of only three Arkansans: the poet John Gould Fletcher, Senator J. William Fulbright, and folklorist Vance Randolph, who was then living in Eureka Springs and had published several articles on the Ozark dialect.¹² The Arkansas Folklore Society brought her into contact with two of these men and intimately linked her to one of them for the rest of her life.

In the 1930s a national enthusiasm for folk culture was created through a series of regional folk festivals held across the country as qualifying events for the National Folk Festival in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1934. Randolph had helped organize one such folk festival in Eureka Springs, where he had found a community of writers, artists, and composers who grounded their work in the culture of the place. Randolph's work had attracted interested luminaries to the area, including the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet John Gould Fletcher,¹³ and the Arkansas Folklore Society was created in Randolph's Eureka Springs apartment.¹⁴

The prime movers who founded the society in 1949 included Randolph and UofA faculty such as Herbert Halpert (a visiting professor and folklorist)¹⁵, Howard Carter (English department chair), and English faculty members Robert Morris, Parler, Claude W. Faulkner, and Leighton Rudolph. According to Rudolph, Fletcher was elected president in the hope that his notoriety would help the society's funding prospects.¹⁶ The group collected a substantial amount of folklore material, and much of what became the UofA Folklore Collection came from the society's newsletters, which were created on Parler's recommendation.¹⁷

Also in 1949, Parler developed the UofA's first folklore course, be-

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Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned. All submissions will be considered for publication in the WCHS journal *Flashback*. WCHS reserves the right to award one or no prizes. Back issues of *Flashback* are available at the Fayetteville Public Library.

Submit manuscripts by June 30, 2022, by mail or email:

- * By mail: Patsy Watkins, WCHS Prize, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

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For questions, contact Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu.

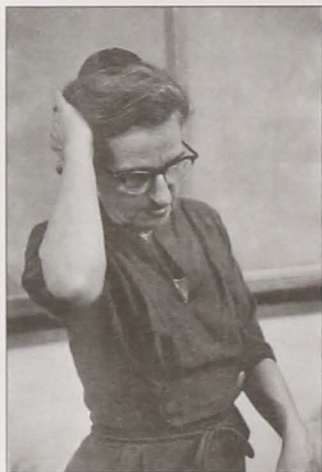


Parler (center left) tape recording musicians in the Oriole barbershop in Bentonville, ca. 1950s. Photographer Robert M. Mottar. Mary C. Parler Photographs Collection (MC 896), UofA Folklore Collection, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville

came director of the UofA Folklore Research Project, and began compiling archival materials.¹⁸ The holdings amassed by Parler and her field assistants and students included 3,640 folk songs (442 reels equaling 137,400 feet of audiotape with transcriptions for them all), comprising one of the largest collections of its kind.¹⁹

These recordings represent a signature contribution to the field. They include several “event” ballads native to Arkansas, a choir of Cherokees singing Baptist hymns, songs collected from immigrants, numerous ballads of the type classified by scholar George Malcolm Laws as “Native American ballads,”²⁰ fiddle tunes, jokes, and tales. The Ozarkers’ versions of the English and Scottish ballads compiled by American scholar and folklorist Francis James Child were the focus of Parler’s acquisitions.²¹ Her collection includes a rich tradition of British balladry, the written forms of which can be traced back to the 13th century.

As a folklorist, Parler understood the cyclical nature of folk traditions, that there is a cultural process of waxing and waning, but she also believed that traditional cultures were threatened by the rapid expansion of towns and cities and by the growing technologies of radio and television – which fueled her obsession with collecting. Along with other collectors, she thought the U.S. was on the verge of a cultural apocalypse, and that she and her assistants were recording the last days of a disappearing way of life. They documented speech patterns, sayings, songs, and tunes that, they believed, would soon vanish from the cultural landscape. Parler had the foresight to preserve for posterity the original songs written by those she interviewed and recorded, their interpretations of early popular music forms that had been regionalized, and their renditions of folk songs



Parler teaching a class in folklore in Old Main on the UofA campus. Mary C. Parler Photographs (MC 896), number 4. UofA Folklore Collection, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville

learned from the recordings of performers such as the Carter Family, Jimmie Rodgers, or Woody Guthrie.²²

By 1949, when Parler set out collecting, the changes and additions in the world of folklore scholarship, concerning folk song tradition in particular, had opened the door of inclusion much wider. Not only was the UofA Folklore Collection, which she oversaw, one of the largest, but also it is notable for including all of the known traditions – English and Scottish balladry, Native American balladry, and African American and European American traditions.

When Parler first started collecting, others said her task would be arduous and that she might return empty-handed. Their doubts may have been based in the fact she was a woman, and it was uncommon for women, especially educated women not from the Ozarks or Arkansas, to take to the back roads alone. This was an unexpected sight to most residents of the area. Culturally speaking, it was uncommon for anyone, male or female, to address a stranger with a request for information such as Parler was seeking. Consistent with her general character and her determination and skill, she laughed at the suggestion of failure, and on her first field trip came back with 18 songs recorded from Virgil Lance of Mountain Home.²³

A distinguishing aspect of the field recordings is Parler's ability to establish rapport with her informants and consequently obtain large amounts of contextual information, including biographical and other details. Raised in the Deep South as she was, Parler, with her "honey-voiced, bespectacled" nature, vast knowledge, patience, and genuine interest, could draw information from the subjects of her inquiry that initially they might have held guarded.²⁴

Being a UofA professor of folklore gave Parler a unique advantage over many of her collecting colleagues and offered opportunities that substantially enhanced the breadth of her collection. Semester after semester, a parade of eager students filed into her classroom, more often than not with relatives in the area, many of whom sang or played or knew someone who did.²⁵ She had some of the most popular courses on campus. There was often a waiting list to join.

For their term projects, Parler sent her students into the field to record their relatives, friends, and neighbors. They returned with recordings, biographical information, transcriptions, and sometimes photographs of

those interviewed. Part of the final grade for the course required that all students regardless of musical prowess, learn a song from an informant of their choosing and then at the end of the semester perform the song in front of their classmates as she recorded the concert. This served a trifold purpose. The threat of public performance warded off those who might consider her class a “fluff” course,²⁶ provided Parler with contact information on informants, and significantly diversified the amount of material in the folk song collection.

According to friend and colleague Ernie Deane, “Emphasis in each student’s collecting effort was on person-to-person interviewing. Necessarily parents, grandparents, kinfolks, friends, old family servants, elderly neighbors, and other individuals became participants in the quest for folklore materials.”²⁷ Students recorded sayings, stories, and songs from their grandparents and the old-timers in town and the surrounding areas. They also left their mark on the folklore collection and in the indexes. Parler cited each student project or report as if it had been collected by a field assistant or other collaborator.²⁸

Parler’s collaborative understanding of field recording, that it was a partnership of information mining, was evident not only in her interview style but also in the egalitarian way in which she represented her students’ contributions. She seemingly felt that her role as scholar came in the interpretation and analysis of the material. She spent countless hours compiling permutations of the material generated for the collection, including subcategory lists, and crafting bibliographies to accompany the collection. She nurtured this idea in her students and in the young folk song collectors and performers who crossed her path.

Folk songs were only one part of the UofA Folklore Collection gathered under Parler’s supervision. Stored in Special Collections in the UofA Mullins’ Library is a mostly unprocessed collection of some 60,000 handwritten note cards of “Ozark-isms” collected by Parler, her assistants, and students.²⁹ They include citations organized into 18 volumes of unpublished typescript: folk beliefs and superstitions, proverbs separated into maxims and adjectival comparisons, riddles, and ballads and songs.³⁰ According to Deane, “Mary Parler did this extensive project herself in addition to all her other duties, including teaching. She contributed this and other materials, to the University without any additional compensation – and, for that matter, with very little resulting recognition.”³¹

It is difficult to say why Parler never got much recognition. Perhaps the study of common or vernacular culture itself was underappreciated in the university system. Perhaps a change in leadership in the English department in the course of her tenure at the UofA made support for her work more difficult. A darker hypothesis is that her work has been underappreciated because she was a woman doing what, at the time, was deemed unwomanly work and that she lived in what was considered an unladylike way.³² Certainly, she was appreciated by her students,

and several later displayed a folkloric influence in their work or joined the closely knit realm of Ozark folklore enthusiasts.

While her passion and persistence were largely ignored by the university, others recognized the value of her work. In 1954 CBS made her the focus of an episode of the television program "The Search," a series that highlighted interesting people doing interesting work around the nation. This was the first time Parler received national attention for collecting Arkansas folklore, and she relished the opportunity, lining up the performers who appeared on the show, all of whom she had recorded for the UofA Folklore Collection. "The Search" offers a glimpse into how charming she was both as an individual and as a collector working with hill folks in Northwest Arkansas.³³ It demonstrated how Parler worked in the field, following her traipsing through "the wilds" of the Ozarks, down dirt and gravel roads in search of a tune that had its roots in an Elizabethan ballad, until overhearing a girl sing it at a play party which had been staged for the TV crew.³⁴

Among the recordings in the UofA collection are two that highlight people who later became famous for their singing and songwriting. Huntsville native Ronnie Hawkins was a student of Parler's at the UofA and was recorded for the collection shortly before he launched his band, Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks. In the late 1950s, the group began touring Canada, eventually touring and recording with Bob Dylan and then on their own as The Band. Similarly, Jimmy Morris was recorded by Parler in the 1950s before he made it big in 1959 with the hit record "The Battle of New Orleans" under the performing name of Jimmy Driftwood.³⁵ Morris was a native of Stone County, a teacher, and an aspiring songwriter when Parler met him. As Jimmy Driftwood, he wrote more than 6,000 songs, most of them in a traditional style, and had a brief but successful recording career with RCA Victor.³⁶

Within a few years of their initial meeting, Parler found Vance Randolph to be a kindred spirit. They naturally complemented each other's professional strengths, and as they developed a long and mutually beneficial research and publishing relationship,³⁷ Parler and Randolph also became romantically involved.³⁸ The flirtation that had begun at the Ar-



Parler and Vance Randolph at their home at 808 Cleveland Street in Fayetteville, ca. 1962. Photograph by Ernie Dumas. Mary C. Parler Papers (MC 1501), UofA Folklore Collection, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville

Arkansas Folklore Society meetings in 1950 eventually led to the marriage of Vance Randolph, age 70, and Mary Celestia Parler, age 57, in the spring of 1962.³⁹

Randolph had moved from Eureka Springs to Fayetteville in 1960 and had a small house on Leverett Street. He and Parler lived there for several years, moving to a nursing home together in 1975.⁴⁰ The two passed the time by intellectually sparring and entertaining visitors who came to talk with Vance about his work and their work together.⁴¹

In 1963, Mary Celestia Parler Randolph published her only book, *An Arkansas Ballet Book*, a compilation of the transcriptions of Ozark ballads that she had collected over the years.⁴² The book resembled a large mimeographed poetry chapbook in appearance. There was no contextual information provided for its contents. Still, it offers an important point of reference in the folk song collecting of Arkansas and is an interesting collection of Arkansas folklore materials, which were bound into volumes but never published.⁴³

In 1972, she was granted emeritus status and retired from the UofA in 1975.⁴⁴ She and Randolph shared a joyful, though never financially prosperous life in Fayetteville. Randolph died in 1980 and is buried in the National Cemetery in Fayetteville, due to his service in World War I.⁴⁵ Parler returned to South Carolina to live with her sister, Frances Lott, and died less than a year later.⁴⁶ She is buried four miles from where she was born, at the Church of the Holy Cross in Stateburg, South Carolina. Her gravestone reads, "Gladley Wolde She Lerne and Gladley Teche," an homage to her beloved Chaucer and to a life well lived.⁴⁷

Mary Celestia Parler Randolph's legacy is the collection and archives at the UofA. Through her tireless work and that of her assistants and students, the lives, memories, songs, stories, and sayings of hundreds of Ozark people were documented. She dedicated her life to recording the lives, music, and culture of the Arkansas people and encouraged a host of musicians, scholars, and students associated with her projects.

As Randolph's biographer and UofA American studies professor Robert Cochran opined, "The only shortcoming [about Randolph and Parler] is that Vance deserved all the attention he got, but he cast a big shadow. Mary never got quite the attention she deserved."⁴⁸

In 1983, a fellowship was established in honor of Mary Celestia Parler and Randolph in the UofA English department.⁴⁹ In 2005, the UofA Libraries hosted a conference, "A Collector in Her Own Right: Reassessing Mary Celestia Parler's Contribution to Ozark Folklore," which reinforced her importance to Arkansas cultural history. And in 2014, the UofA Special Collections department launched an inclusive website offering her collection of Arkansas cultural treasures to a worldwide audience.⁵⁰

Endnotes

¹Vance Randolph, "Ozark Folksongs," 4 vols. (Columbia: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1946-1950). Randolph was an avid collector of Ozark oral traditions. His works on the area are numerous and highly regarded. His field recordings reside at the Library of Congress; see John Lomax and Ruby Lomax, "1939 Southern Recording Trip Field Notes," 1939, Library of Congress. In 1939 John Lomax, honorary consultant and curator of the Archive of American Folk Song (now the Archive of Folk Culture, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress), and Ruby Lomax, his wife, took a three-month, 6,502-mile trip through the southern states collecting songs from the region.

²Jim Clark, News Service announcement, University of Arkansas, July 25, 1975, Mary Celestia Parler Randolph vertical file, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville (hereafter Parler Randolph vertical file); Arkansas Folklore Society and UofA Folklore Research Project, *Ozark Folklore* 1-4 (1950-1958).

³Max Hunter, *The Max Hunter Collection of Ozark Folk Songs*, 40 vols. (Springfield, Mo.: Springfield-Green County Library District and Missouri State University, 2000). Hunter's audio collection includes many joint ventures between his and Parler's collection. See the special issue dedicated to Vance Randolph: *Missouri Folklore Society Journal* 4 (1982).

⁴Frances Lott to Norma Ortiz, July 24, 1986, Parler Randolph vertical file. See also Yates Snowden, ed., *History of South Carolina* (New York: Lewis, 1920), 5:49-50. There are short biographies of Dr. Marvin Lamar Parler and Josie Platt Parler in this history and reference to Josie Parler's writings. The only mention of Mary Celestia Parler that Snowden included is a poem written by her from the perspective of a child in the Aycock store in Wedgefield, South Carolina, at Christmas time (387-388). See also "Christmas in Aycock's Store," Parler Randolph vertical file.

⁵Frances Lott to Norma Ortiz, letter. See also L. Hardy Wright, draft article written for *Southern Accent*, n.d., Mary Celestia Parler Randolph vertical file; Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville.

⁶Wright, draft article. See also Mary Celestia Parler Randolph scrapbook, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville. The scrapbook contains some articles and announcements by or surrounding Mary Celestia Parler. The majority of the contents are articles or book reviews written by her mother, Josie Platt Parler (signed J.P. or J.P.P.). See also Leighton Rudolph, interview by Rachel Reynolds, April 26, 2002. Rudolph was a colleague of Parler at the UofA and one of the founding members, along with Parler, of the Arkansas Folklore Society.

⁷Rudolph, interview.

⁸Ibid. See also Margaret Rule, "Mary C.," *Grapevine*, a local weekly newspaper. The exact publication date is unknown, but it was shortly after Parler's death. Rule was an English professor and friend of Parler. The notes were provided to me by Rule's granddaughter Sarah K. Moore in Fayetteville.

⁹Rudolph, interview.

¹⁰Rule, "Mary C.," 1.

¹¹Wright, draft article.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Fletcher was married to Charlie May Simon, the daughter of Wayman Hogue. She published a book in 1946 called *Straw in the Sun* about homesteading in the Ozarks in the 1930s. Her father had written *Back Yonder: An Ozark Chronicle* (1932). Randolph said that Fletcher had a long interest in folklore and staged the first folk festival on the UofA campus in 1949.

¹⁴Robert Morris, "The First Arkansas Folklore Society," *Grapevine* 8, No. 17 (December 9, 1981).

¹⁵Halpert and his family became lifelong friends of and advocates for both Mary Parler and Vance Randolph.

¹⁶Rudolph, interview.

¹⁷"Articles from Ozark Folklore," *Mid-America Folklore* 17 (Spring 1989), p. 26.

¹⁸Mary Celestia Parler Papers, 1950-1980, UofA Special Collections, finding aid, <https://librar-flashback>, Spring 2022

ies.uark.edu/specialcollections/findingaids/parlerpapers.html.

¹⁹Mary Celestia Parler, "Research in Folklore," *Arkansas Alumnus* (November 1958), p. 4.

²⁰George Malcolm Laws, *Native American Balladry: A Descriptive Study and a Bibliographical Syllabus* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1950).

²¹Hunter, *Max Hunter Collection*, Vol. 1. Hunter's preference, if already becoming out of vogue, was tied to the philosophy of the nation's great pioneering folk song collections, especially that of Francis James Child. Child, a Harvard professor, completed the first modern assemblage of ancient balladry in the final decades of the 19th century: *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-1898; repr., New York: Dover, 2003).

²²Parler Papers, finding aid.

²³Wright, draft article; reels 1-442, Folklore Collection.

²⁴Lott, interview. There are numerous reels of such material in the collection.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ernie Deane, "Ozarks Country," *Springdale News*, April 10, 1984, n.p., in Parler Randolph vertical file.

²⁷Parler Papers, finding aid.

²⁸Non-song material, Folklore Collection.

²⁹Unprocessed material, Folklore Collection.

³⁰Non-song material, Folklore Collection.

³¹Ernie Deane, "The Folklore Collection of 'Mary C.,'" *Ozarks Mountaineer* (May-June 1984), pp. 30-31, in Parler Randolph vertical file.

³²Parler was known for her smoking and drinking, sometimes on campus, sometimes in class. She was often said to have a disheveled appearance.

³³Henwar Rodakiewicz, dir., *The Search*, Information Productions, CBS, November 4, 1954.

³⁴Alan L. Spurgeon and David Gadberry, "Mary Jo Davis Henderson: Her Life and Contributions to Ozark Regional Folk Music," *Mid-America Folklore* 29, Nos. 1-2 (Summer 2002), p. 9.

³⁵Zac Cothren, "Jimmy Driftwood (1907-1998)," in *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History and Culture*. Accessed September 17, 2013, at <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?entryID=2187>.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Vance Randolph and George P. Wilson, *Down in the Holler: A Gallery of Ozark Folk Speech* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), pp. vii-viii.; Robert Cochran, *Vance Randolph: An Ozark Life* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1985), pp. 86-87; Vance Randolph vertical file, Special Collections, UofA Libraries, Fayetteville; Vance Randolph, *The Talking Turtle and Other Ozark Folk Tales* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); Vance Randolph, *Hot Springs and Hell and Other Folk Jests and Anecdotes from the Ozarks* (Hatboro, Pa.: Folklore Associates, 1965), p. vii.

³⁸Cochran, *Vance Randolph*, p. 206; Private collection, Gordon McCann.

³⁹Randolph, Manuscripts and Correspondence; Rule, "Mary C." p. 2.

⁴⁰Cochran, *Vance Randolph*, p. 218.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Mary Celestia Parler, *An Arkansas Ballet Book* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1963).

⁴³Dr. Leo Van Scyoc, interview by Rachel Reynolds, April 20, 2002.

⁴⁴Clark, News Service announcement.

⁴⁵Cochran, *Vance Randolph*, pp. 217-225.

⁴⁶Lott, interview.

⁴⁷The quote comes from "The Clerk of Oxford's Tale" in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

⁴⁸Quoted in Spurgeon and Gadberry, "Mary Jo Davis Henderson," p. 9.

⁴⁹Norma Conner, UofA News Service article, October 12, 1983, box 3, folder 30, UofA News Service Materials, 1960s-2000, Special Collections, UofA Libraries.

⁵⁰An overview of Mary Celestia Parler Research Materials can be found at <https://libraries.uark.edu/specialcollections/research/guides/folklore/parler.php>.



1953: Goshen Plans a New Community Building

Planning Committee Minutes show spirit of cooperation and harmony

By Russell Gayer

The town and community of Goshen is located just east of the confluence of the White River and Richland Creek in eastern Washington County. Many of the earliest settlers arrived around 1830 and came from Tennessee, North Carolina, Alabama, and other southern states. Lesser numbers arrived from Indiana, Illinois, and other northern states.¹

In 1851 President Millard Fillmore deeded the area of Goshen and Mayfield as a land grant to Rev. James A. Mayfield after he had homesteaded it for seven years.²

Both communities had acreage set aside for campgrounds shared by worshipers of the Methodist-Episcopal (South), Baptists, and other Protestant religions. During the summer months, revivals were held at these campgrounds.³

Somewhere between 1851 and 1853, James A. Mayfield deeded 40 acres of land to James M. Burk and wife Sally, and they in turn apparently sold 11 acres of that portion to the Methodist-Episcopal (South) for campgrounds of which Moses Dutton, Joshua Caldwell, James Caldwell, Stephen D. Enyart, and James Mayfield were trustees.⁴

The Methodist campground, as it became known, also hosted secular activities and other events. Lawrence Gayer, born 1909, recalled at-

Russell Gayer is a 4th generation Ozark native, residing on the original family homestead near Goshen, Arkansas. He is the author of The Perils of Heavy Thinking and One Idiot Short of a Village, and he recently fabricated an entire novel entitled, Criminal Mimes.



Goshen Community Building. Photograph taken from the City of Goshen website, accessed at <https://www.cityofgoshenar.net/PhotoGallery.aspx#gallery-7>

tending all-day festivals which included a picnic, baseball games, and a roped off arena for boxing matches.⁵

Residents relied on agriculture and the timber industry as their primary source of income. They also formed a strong sense of community, with neighbor helping neighbor, and working together for the common good.

After the closing of the Goshen School in 1948, the property reverted to the Methodist Church. The church allowed the community to use the building for a variety of events including a series of regular musical performances which became known as “The Ozark Mountain Jamboree from the Land of Goshen.”⁶

The show became quite popular with both musicians and fans traveling from around the region to be part of the festivities. Speculation has it that at one or more of these events some unruly behavior occurred that was deemed inappropriate conduct on church property. Dallas Hale recalls an incident where a ruffian known as Blackie Batag picked a fight with a mild-mannered citizen, who promptly whipped Blackie.⁷

It’s unclear whether the church withdrew the offer for use of the building, or if community leaders decided they needed a larger, more modern facility to host events. In either case, their actions led to the creation of a community center owned and operated by the citizens of Goshen.

The following is a transcript of the original handwritten minutes of the group’s meetings in 1953 as recorded by Wilma Guinn, Secretary.

Note: The text of these minutes is presented as recorded in the originals.

MINUTES OF THE GOSHEN COMMUNITY MEETINGS, 1953

As recorded by Wilma Guinn, Secretary

January 9, 1953

Residents of the Goshen community met on Friday night, January 9, 1953 in Goshen to discuss plans for building a new community building.

The meeting was called to order by L.B. Langley. Three plats of land was offered for the building by Clifford Dutton, Ben Clark, and Oren Stroud. It was voted upon, and the site selected for the building was on Ben Clark’s

farm at the corner of old Hi-way 45 and the Richland View Road.

A 5 man building committee was elected. They were Homer Bragg, Horace Langham, L.B. Langley, C.L. Guinn, and Clifford Dutton, as Chairman.

It was voted to build a 30' x 60' cement-block house.

The finance committee elected were W.C. Ledbetter, Roy McDonald, Jeff Dutton, Bud Gayer, and Ardeth Guinn.

Wilma Guinn was elected Secretary and Treasurer.

The work is to start immediately.

A weekly program called The Ozark Mountain Jamboree from the Land of Goshen is presented each Thursday evening. The program consists of any local talent that may be present and is tape recorded and played over station KBRS in Springdale each Saturday.

The women of the community serve in the kitchen and the proceeds goes to the up keep of the building. This averages approx. \$20 a month.

February 27, 1953

Friends and residents of the Goshen Community met on Friday night, February 27, 1953 and celebrated the opening of the new Community Building with a cooperative dinner. Approx. 150 persons attended. Special guests were Mrs. Margaret Brownfield, H.D. Agent; Carl Rose, County Agent and J.D. Ford, Assitant County Agent. Each spoke briefly and Mr. Rose explained the Community Improvement Program and urged Goshen to enter. Mr. Ford showed pictures on fire prevention.

It was agreed upon to hold regular meetings on the 4th Friday night of each month for our family night. We would have a cooperative dinner and attend to any business that might come up.

March 10, 1953

The board met on March 10, 1953. Elections for new board members to serve five-year terms will be held the first of each year, and a secretary.

It was discussed and agreed to buy a piano and a butane tank. Mr. Langley volunteered the use of a heater for the remainder of the spring.

March 27, 1953

On March 27, 1953, our regular family night, we held an old-fashioned pie supper, which netted \$139.25.

L.B. Langley served as auctioneer. Arvilla Gayer received the "Pretty Girl Cake." The couple receiving the pickles for being the most love sick were Roy McDonald and Miss Gertrude Flynn. Jimmy Dutton was the quickest to guess what was in the guess cake, and Ben Clark received a bar of Lava Soap for having the "dirtiest" feet.

The proceeds will go to the further completion of the building.

April 24, 1953

On Friday night, April 24, 1953, we met for our regular monthly meeting. After dinner we were entertained with a program led by Mrs. Roy McDonald.

The History of the Progress of Goshen written by Mrs. McDonald was read by Mrs. Thurman Hale. A poem, "How to get and preserve Husbands," was read by Mrs. McDonald.

A quilt donated by Mrs. Ben Clark was given away, going to Mrs. John Guinn. It netted \$54.50. This was followed by group singing. Everyone had an enjoyable evening.

May 1953

Following the dinner Friday evening, the Rural Improvement Program was discussed. Ben Clark was elected Chairman, Linnie Langham, Vice Chairman, and Ruth Langley, Publicity Chairman of the project.

The following committees were appointed:

Farm Improvement – Jiggs Crowder, L.B. Langley, and C.H. Bragg

Home Improvement – Ardeth Guinn, Minnie Gayer, and Mrs. Crowder.

Community Improvement – Pauline Clark, Horace Langham, and Roy Bragg.

The following goals were set to be accomplished:

1. To have our building debt free by the end of the year.
2. To build a kitchen in the building.
3. To furnish the kitchen with a stove, refrigerator, cabinets, coffee maker (48 cup), cups, and silverware.
4. To have a kitchen shower.
5. To get some banquet tables.
6. To landscape the Community ground
7. To have Community Fair
8. Collect soil samples to be analyzed
9. Have water tested.
10. Have rat control program
11. Purchase a piano
12. Install butane gas

June 1953

Family night again in Goshen. Everyone picking up well filled baskets, headed for the community building for another enjoyable evening.

Admiring the work we had accomplished thus far, we realized we could not have done so if it had not been for the cooperation we received from everyone. We decided that next month we would have an appreciation dinner and invite everyone that had donated to the building in any way.

Mrs. Horace Langham, Mrs. L.B. Langley, Mrs. Clifford Dutton, Mrs. Ben Clark, and Mrs. C.L. Guinn were appointed to work on the committee.

Joe McKim, Manager of L & P Gas & Equipment Co. of Springdale donated a gas range for the kitchen.

July 15, 1953

The "appreciation dinner" committee got together and contacted as many persons as they could and invited them to come and help with the dinner. Written invitations were sent to all others.



From left, Coffee time (1953) with Ben Clark, Pauline Clark, Omer Guinn, Lola Eubanks, and Linnie Langham. Photograph courtesy Max Poye, mayor of Goshen.

Four-dozen stainless steel forks and spoons were ordered for the building.

Some of the men in the Community donated their time, labor, and materials and started on the cabinets in the kitchen.

July 24, 1953

The appreciation dinner, for those who had donated to the new building, was given the night of July 24, 1953.

It was given potluck style. The dinner was spread on banquet table, the length of the building. Smaller

tables were set through out the building, so everyone could be seated.

Following the dinner a musical program was presented.

Joe McKim expressed his desire to bring the Chamber of Commerce from Springdale out for dinner at a later date.

August 14, 1953

A kitchen shower was given to the Community Building on Aug. 14, 1953. Which was attended by a large crowd. Gifts were opened by Omer Guinn and Ben Clark. Gifts included potholders, towels, tea-towels, dishes, pots & pans, a tea kettle, and many other items.

Plans were made to serve a fair booster dinner on Aug. 21, 1953 sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce in Fayetteville.

A work day was set for August 20th.

Aug. 20, 1953

A group gathered together to do some work at the Community Building. Some men bringing their tractors and blades for landscaping, moving some rocks & dirt and leveling the ground.

A water pump, donated by Ruby Hughes, was installed. And the kitchen cabinets were completed. The women brought lunch and did some cleaning inside the building.

August 21, 1953

The first Fair Booster Dinner for 1953 was held in the community building on Aug. 21. An estimate of 250 person were present, according to John I. Smith, toastmaster.

Three tables, spread the length of the building, and other smaller tables, were set with seasonal garden flowers placed at intervals. Mrs. Horace Langham was Chairman of the committee of dinner.

On the menu was baked ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, sliced tomatoes, green beans, salad, and hot rolls. Desert was homemade pies and coffee.

Following the dinner, Bill Blair of Springdale led the group in singing. Those appearing on the program included Joe McKim, Shorty Parsons, & Mayor Bob Sharp of Springdale; Clint Walden, Austin Parrish, Kirk Hale, Ben Clark, and County Agent, Carl Rose & Ben Clark of our community. Each 4-Her present told what he was planning to enter in the fair.

Reports were given by the Superintendents of the Swine & Sheep building.

September 5, 1953

The Goshen Community Fair got under way the morning of September 5, 1953, with all the exhibits in place by 10am. These included exhibits of; dairy & beef cattle, sheep, hogs, poultry & rabbits, field crops, horticulture, flower arrangements, canning, cooking, sewing, handicrafts, crochet & knitting, foods, clothing, & other items.

The boys and girls of the 4-H Club each had a booth.

A 4-H Club fitting & showing school was held in the morning from 10 to 11 o'clock. Glen Pursley, Extension dairyman, demonstrated how to fit and show an animal in a Jr. fitting & showing contest.

The judging of the Women's Division was finished by noon.

In the afternoon, showing and judging of the beef cattle began at 2 o'clock, followed by the dairy, sheep, & other animals.

Appropriate ribbons were awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each of the classes.

The fair closed that night with a variety program arranged by Mrs. Ardeth Guinn.

Food and drinks were served on the grounds.

More than 300 people attended.

Judges for the Women's division were Miss Lorraine Williams and Mrs. W. Thompson. For the cattle & hogs, Mr. Ray judged, and Polk Bookout judged the sheep.

The monthly meeting for September was postponed until October because of a conflicting date with the Washington County Fair.

October 23, 1953

On Community night Oct. 23, 1953 approx. 50 persons met to gether.

After dinner in the business meeting, it was decided to order some folding table legs & make banquet tables. A committee of three men, Horace Langham, John, Guinn, and C.H. Bragg were appointed to see that the tables were completed.

A committee was appointed to help with the Community Improvement Contest, to help with the blanks & etc. They were Linnie Langham, Lola Eubanks, Ruth Langley, Omer Guinn, Ben Clark, & Jiggs Crowder.

In case there be any prize money won it will go into the Community fund.

October 26, 1953

Mr. Rose was called and met with a group on October 26, 1953 to discuss the contest in further details.

November 16, 1953

A dinner was served Monday evening Nov. 16, 1953 by the women of the community sponsored by the Springdale Chamber of Commerce.

Approx. 125 people were served. Joe McKim, pres of the C. of C. was master of ceremonies. The invocation was given by Rev. Kenneth Sanders.

The group joined together in singing chorus' led by Bill Blair. Roy Bragg of Goshen gave the welcome address and Joe Robinson of Springdale gave the response. D.D. Deaver gave some interesting folklore of Goshen. He told us that yrs. ago Goshen was called College Grove. The first postmaster of the community was Mose Dutton.

A musical program was presented by the Girls quartet and a Male quintet from Springdale. The program was concluded by the group singing together, "Blest Be the Tie That Binds."

November 27, 1953

Following the cooperative dinner on Fri night Nov 27, 1953, a business meeting was held.

Committee reports were given by different chairmen and Wed. was set for Rat-Poison day.

Horace Langham reported the banquet tables had been completed and light fixtures had been bought and put up.

A call meeting was scheduled for Tues. night Dec. 1, 1953 to discuss further plans for the program.

December 1, 1953

Members of the Goshen community met Tues. night, Dec. 1, 1953, at the Community building to work on the Rural Community Improvement Program. Ben Clark, Chairman presided.

Reports were given by different committee chairmen. The drawing of the map has been started.

Mr. H. Bragg gave a report on the soil samples he had received. Horace Langham, Omer Guinn, & Roy McDonald were appointed to help on that committee.

Linnie Langham, Mildred Hale, and Ardeth Guinn were appointed to take pictures of some of the improvements in the community.

Pauline Clark reported she had sent a drawing of the Community ground to Mr. Burton for his advice on landscaping.

Wayne Milsap resigned from Health & Safety because of illness. Clifford Dutton was appointed to take his place.

Fire Prevention was voted as a project for next year.

Tues. night, December 15, was the night chosen for the 4-H achievement banquet. Scheduled for Sat. night, Dec. 19 is to be the community supper and Christmas tree. Everyone is to bring a gift to be exchanged.

A letter was read from Mr. Rose & Mr. Brownfield announcing the meeting at the fair ground to plan work for 1954. Everyone was urged to attend.



Goshen Kitchen Band, performing in Little Rock. From left, Ardeth Guinn, Wilma Guinn, Oleta Dutton, Grace Roberts (piano), Pauline Clark, Ester Gayer, Lola Eubanks. Photograph courtesy Max Poye, mayor of Goshen.

December 8, 1953

The Goshen 4-H members entertained the community on the evening of Dec. 8, 1953.

After their business meeting, Mary Jo Bragg demonstrated on making sequin ear rings. A demonstration on covering an ironing board with aluminum foil was given by Shirley Dutton. A contest was held between the girls on ironing gingham blouses with 1st place going to Patty Gray, with Arvilla Gayer placing second.

At the business meeting following, Linnie Langham read a poem, "Neighboring Builds Faith."

Mr. L.B. Langley reported on the different ones he had contacted about soil samples. Some interesting reports were given different ones on new or outstanding crops they had tried this year.

Thurman Hale gave a report on the Millet & Arkwin oats he had sowed this year. Mr. Langley told about Sargo and its use.

Mildred Hale told us about a vegetable she had planted this yr. A Butter Pea, a butter bean & pea cross.

Hens were brought to the meeting to be sold to help pay for the light fixtures. Mildred Hale volunteered to take them to town the following day.

A donation was taken up to buy candy for the children at the Christmas Party to be held Dec. 19.

Roy McDonald was to see to getting the Xmas tree and Mrs. Ruth Langley was to see to the decorating.

Linnie Langham gave a report on the trip to Little Rock to the Farm Bureau Meeting, which a group from here attended.

December 15, 1953

The achievement banquet for the Goshen 4-H Club was held at the Community house Tuesday with approximately 75 parents, friends & club members attending.

J.D. Ford, Jr., Assistant County Agent, was master of ceremonies. Christmas carols were sung, led by the Rev. Martin, after which a marionette show was given under the direction of Miss McHugh(sp?). Girls from the University High School gave the presentation.

Dallas Hale & Billy Charles Phillips told of their trip to Chicago and

Merit Awards & gifts were distributed to all club members who had turned in their reports. Boys received 4-H belt buckles & girls, 4-H bracelets.

Mrs. Ruth Langley told the history of the club, preceding the commendation to Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Dutton, local 4-H leaders.

December 19, 1953

The Christmas Party and dinner was held Dec. 19, 1953 at the Community house.

After the dinner, Christmas carols were sung by the group, followed by the exchanging of gifts.

Pauline Clark reported on the landscaping sketch she had received from Mr. Burton, and different ones were asked to bring the different kinds of trees & shrubs to the grounds Dec. 29, the day set to work.

December 29, 1953

Tuesday, Dec. 29 was the day set to work at the Community grounds. Different ones bringing trees & shrubs to be set.

Joe McKim donated & delivered a refrigerator to the building to be used in the kitchen and the 48-cup coffee maker has been received.

In the years that followed, the Goshen Community Building became the meeting place for various local organizations including The Goshen Rural Community Improvement Club, The Goshen Home Extension Club, The Goshen Riding Club, The Goshen 4H Club, and others. The building was also available for use by members of the community to host family reunions and fund-raising events.

The Goshen Community Building is the polling site for Goshen City and Goshen Township.

In April 2008, the City of Goshen took over responsibility for the care and upkeep of the building. It is still available for use by members of the community for a fee of \$50 per event.

Endnotes

¹From document written by Mrs. E.C. Dutton, granddaughter of Stephen Enyart

²Unpublished document. Abstract for Goshen Community Building ("The United States of America To James Mayfield, assignee of Ethel L. Beavans"), filed for record May 27, 1918 (Greer Abstract Company, Fayetteville, Arkansas). Recorded in volume 178, page 25.

³Unpublished document entitled "History of the Goshen Methodist Church," by Dolores Cook.

⁴Filed and recorded September 22, 1853. Recorded Conveyance Record "H" page 600. In possession of Goshen United Methodist Church.

⁵Lawrence Gayer, Interview with the author, June 21, 1988, Goshen, Arkansas.

⁶*Northwest Arkansas Times*, September 6, 1952, p. 5. This program was also referred to as the Land O' Goshen Show.

⁷Dallas Hale, Interview with the author, January 31, 2021, Goshen, Arkansas.



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